

## The Jews in Texas

By Rev. Henry Cohen, Galveston, Texas.

(Concluded from Last Week)

His first Hebrew teacher was Rev. Jacob Bensadon of Philadelphia, who in the year 1820 was reader to the congregation Mikveh Israel. The salary in those days was very small and teaching was a necessary adjunct. This gentleman was a native of Morocco and read with a nasal twang. De Cordova could imitate Bensadon so well that this worthy Hazana would be startled himself. The Rev. Mr. Keys, an Englishman by birth, was called by the same congregation in 1824. He was in all things relating to voice and delivery the opposite to Mr. Bensadon, but de Cordova could imitate him also. During his long buggy-rides over Texas he was the never-failing source of amusement by reason of his imitative faculty. He was extremely modest, and his character and name are cherished by all who knew him.

In 1848 his brother, Phineas de Cordova (born at Philadelphia, March 28, 1819), now of Austin, where he has resided for the last forty-five years, came to Texas and joined him in business.

As before stated, Jacob had become an excellent operative printer. His brother Phineas had also considerable knowledge of the "art preservative of all arts," having served nearly three years in the office of the National Gazette, then published by Wm. Fry, and edited by the well known Robert Walsh afterward U. S. Consul General to France. The brothers thought that the time had come when the resources of Texas should be published to the world for the purpose of bringing immigrants to the State. The knowledge that the elder brother had of Texas, coupled with literary abilities of the younger, induced them to start a semi-monthly paper, The Texas Herald, which they filled with description of various parts of the State. About one thousand copies of each number were distributed over the Southern and Western States. The articles concerning Texas were freely copied by the newspapers of the South and West, and without doubt attracted many immigrants.

In 1850, at the solicitation of Governor Bell, the printing office was removed to Austin, and a weekly newspaper, the Southwestern American, was published jointly. This paper was continued under his management for three years and was then sold.

Under Bell's administration, the actual claiming by Texas of all the country now called New Mexico originated and caused the passing of the compromise Measure of 1850, one feature of which was the payment to Texas of ten millions of dollars. Phineas de Cordova's paper ably urged the passage of this measure.

The South Western American started the idea of loaning the school fund and donating a portion of the public lands to aid the building of railroads through Texas. When first mentioned it met with much ridicule. One of the most prominent men of Texas, representing Travis County in the Legislature, especially ridiculed the proposed measure, but at the next election for the Legislature he was de-

feated by a large majority upon this very issue. The newspaper aid thus giving materially facilitated the building of railroads. Phineas de Cordova has always felt proud of these two episodes in his life, but in talking amongst his friends he is careful to say of the latter incident that the honor of originating the measure should be given to Judge George W. Paschal and I. A. Paschal, who suggested that the American should advocate the plan and that they would lend their aid, their names being kept secret, which was done.

A democrat from principle, the paper ever supported its party; for six years Phineas de Cordova was a member of the State Democratic Executive Committee, and during the war was Secretary of the Military Board, then consisting of the now venerable patriot Ex-Governor F. R. Lubbock, Ex-Committee, and during the war was Comptroller C. R. Randolph, Treasury Cyrus H. Randolph of the State Senate for the 8th, 9th and 10th Legislature, and was for many years a Notary Public for Travis County, first appointed by P. H. Bell in 1851 and by every other Democratic Governor till 1893.

Mrs. Leonora R. Randall was born in Savannah, Georgia, January 24, 1824, and died in Galveston, November 2, 1888. She was the daughter of Levi S. De Lyon, Judge of the County Court of Catham County, Georgia, and Rebecca De La Motta. In 1838 Miss Leonora Rebecca De Lyon married Levi Charles Habry, Captain in the United States Navy, at St. Mary's, Ga. She came of a well known Jewish family; one brother, James De Lyon, was graduated at West point and was Adjutant of the State troops of Georgia, and another, Colonel Leonorean De Lyon, was graduated at Yale at the age of 16, by special act, and subsequently became a civil engineer. Mrs. Randall, then Mrs. Harby, came to Texas in January, 1859, where she stayed until the close of the war. She then returned to Georgia, disposed of her interest in some property and once more came to the state of her adoption. Her husband, Captain Harby, died in 1870, and in 1879 she married Dr. Edward Randall, an eminent physician of Galveston. She was a Hebrew scholar and loved her religion ardently. She taught the first Jewish Sunday-School in Texas (1862) and was one of the founders of the Ladies' Hebrew Benevolent Society of Galveston.

A few days after her demise, the Galveston Daily News, the leading newspaper of Texas, devoted a lengthy obituary notice to her memory, in which her excellent qualities of heart and mind were faithfully portrayed.

Joseph Osterman was one among the earliest and most esteemed pioneers of Galveston, Texas. He was a good and estimable citizen, always ready to contribute generously towards promoting the general welfare and prosperity of his adopted home. Moreover, his unstained charity and good deeds were so unostentatiously and quietly bestowed that it was truly said of him that "his left hand did not know what his right hand gave."

He met with a tragic death at the beginning of our civil war (1861), being accidentally shot and mortally wounded by a workman in a gunsmith shop.

Mr. Osterman left his native home, Amsterdam, about the year 1820, at the age of nineteen, to seek his fortune in America. After residing for some time in Philadelphia he removed to Baltimore and engaged in business, where he prospered; he there married Rosanna Dyer in the year 1825. Several years later Mrs. Osterman was threatened with pulmonary trouble, and a warmer climate was suggested by the family physician. Texas (then a republic) offered many advantages to settlers, and it was decided to move to Galveston in the year 1839, where Mr. Osterman spent the remainder of his life, which was lamentably cut short by the fatal accident previously mentioned.

Mr. Osterman was an honest, energetic and preserving man, with excellent business qualifications and consequently he was successful. Safe and judicious investments enabled him to amass a handsome competency. His domestic life was conspicuous for kindness, thoughtfulness, affection and devotion. As a friend none was more earnest and sincere. As a citizen he was law-abiding and public-spirited. Those of his contemporaries who survive him must remember his patriot-

ism and his liberality during the civil war, and none can forget that his purse was always open to the needy.

Moritz Kopperl was born October 26, 1828, in Trebitsch, Moravia. His father, Gabriel Herman Kopperl, was a native of the same place, and engaged in literary and mercantile pursuits—a man of rare integrity and benevolence. He died in 1863 in the sixty-ninth year of his age. His mother was Miss Fanny Bauer, a native of Moravia.

The subject of this sketch was educated at Capuchin Institute in his native place and finished his classical education in Nicholsburg, Moravia, and Vienna, Austria. In 1848 he emigrated to America at the suggestion of his uncle, Major Charles Kopperl, who then resided in Mississippi. In the fall of 1848 he engaged in mercantile pursuits at Shongolo, Carroll, County, Mississippi—first as clerk for his uncle, and afterward as the successor of his employer. While residing there he became naturalized citizen of the United States. In 1857 he settled in Galveston as a merchant, and was always known as an enterprising and public spirited citizen. In 1866 he married Miss Isabella Dyer, niece of Mrs. Rosanna Osterman, by whom he had two sons.

In the same year he engaged in the cotton commission business, in which he continued for three years. In 1868

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